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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 6448  
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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; August 12, 2009

TOP HEADLINES

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ROKG-Pursued "Teacher Evaluation System"  
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Hyundai Group Chairwoman Extends Stay in N. Korea to Win Freedom of  
Detained ROK Worker; ROKG Source Says, "Chances Higher for Hyundai  
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Largest Arrest of People on Public Security Charges in 12 Years  
Segye Ilbo  
[1](#)N. Korea Likely to Free ROK Detainee Today

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

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Hyundai Group Chairwoman Hyun Jung-eun extended her stay in North  
Korea yesterday on a mission to secure the release of a detained ROK  
worker and to restore strained inter-Korean relations. She was  
initially scheduled to come home today, but company officials in  
Seoul said that she would stay another day. (All)

The Hyundai chairwoman is likely to meet North Korean leader Kim  
Jong-il today. (All)

According to an ROKG source, North Korea may free not only the  
detained worker but also the four crewmembers of an ROK fishing boat  
being held in the North before the August 15 Liberation Day.  
(Dong-a)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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According to ROKG sources, the USG, after assessing former President  
Bill Clinton's visit to North Korea, has reached a tentative  
conclusion that it is too early to judge that there has been a  
meaningful change in North Korea's attitude concerning its

denuclearization. (Chosun)

#### MEDIA ANALYSIS

##### -N. Korea

Citing ROKG sources, conservative Chosun Ilbo ran an inside-page report that the USG, after assessing former President Bill Clinton's visit to North Korea, has reached a tentative conclusion that it is too early to judge that there has been a meaningful change in North Korea's attitude concerning its denuclearization.

The report quoted an ROKG official as saying: "While North Korea toned down provocative rhetoric, there is no basis to take this as commitment to the irreversible nuclear dismantlement the U.S. is demanding before it improves ties. The ball is still in North Korea's court and the prevailing consensus in the international community is that sanctions should remain in place until the North demonstrates a change in attitude."

All ROK media gave prominent attention to Hyundai Group Chairwoman Hyun Jung-eun's decision yesterday to extend her stay in North Korea for another day. According to media reports, the Hyundai chairwoman, on a mission to secure the release of a detained ROK worker and to restore strained inter-Korean relations, was initially scheduled to come home today. Most ROK media speculated that the

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extension may be related to her meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jongil, which would likely take place today.

Conservative Chosun Ilbo cited sources familiar with North Korean affairs and defectors from the North as analyzing that North Korea's recent conciliatory moves owe much to its staunch ally China, which is implementing unprecedentedly tough sanctions against North Korea.

According to the sources cited, Beijing has recently begun monitoring and regulating exports to the North, especially along the border. The shipments under regulation range from strategic materials to food.

##### - Sentencing of Aung San Suu Kyi

All ROK media gave straight front-and inside-page coverage to yesterday's sentencing of Myanmar's democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi to another 18 months of house arrest for breaching the conditions of her initial house arrest by allowing an uninvited American to stay at her home.

Newspapers carried the following headlines: "'Aung San Suu Kyi Again Under House Arrest... Sentence Aimed at Blocking Her from Contesting Elections Next Year" (conservative Chosun Ilbo, left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun); USG to Discuss Expulsion of Myanmar from ASEAN" (right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo); "Myanmar's Democracy Leader Again Put in Detention... Ruling Military Junta under Heavy International Criticism" (conservative Dong-a Ilbo, moderate Hankook Ilbo); and "Suu Kyi Gets 18 Months Under House Arrest; Secretary Clinton Says, 'USG will Continue to Call for Her Release'" (conservative Segye Ilbo)

#### OPINIONS/EDITORIALS

U.S. SHOULD BE WARY BUT DETERMINED VIS-A-VIS N. Korea  
(Chosun Ilbo, August 12, 2009, page 30)

By Washington correspondent Lee Ha-won

Chuck Downs, the Executive Director of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, carries a business card that contains the title of his book, "North Korea Negotiating Strategy." That is how proud he is of his analysis of Pyongyang's antics. And indeed, the process of Kim Jong-il's capture and release of the two U.S.

journalists follows exactly the analysis he offered a few years ago.

He believes that Pyongyang makes things happen that change its counterpart's interests, in an attempt to lead negotiations to its advantage. And after putting its counterpart on the defensive, Pyongyang tries to wrangle something it wants.

In March, when Washington was warning about the North's preparations for a long-range rocket test, North Korea seized two American reporters at the border with China. It was no coincidence that the North captured the two female journalists, who could draw more attention than any number of male reporters who had worked in the border area.

By sentencing them to 12 years in a labor camp and leaking information that their health was frail, the North put the Barack Obama Administration into an embarrassing position. And just when the world was focusing on sanctions under UN Security Council Resolution 1874, the North drew world attention by inviting former U.S. president Bill Clinton.

To borrow Downs' analysis of the North's negotiating strategy further, the next step for the North will be a call to renegotiate a previously reached accord. Chances are that Pyongyang will call for a change in the September 19, 2005 statement of principles in the Six-Party Talks that agreed on the dismantlement of the North's nuclear facilities.

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Now the U.S. is mulling how to respond to this atmosphere of dialogue engendered by Pyongyang.

A common feature of senior U.S. officials in charge of the North Korea issue is their experience of having previously been hit over the head once or twice by the North. Having seen written agreements between states torn up like waste paper, they strongly feel the need for prudence. Earlier this year, I heard a senior U.S. official promise, "We'll retaliate." Hearing the firmness in the voice of an ordinarily mild-tempered man, I thought Pyongyang will find it more difficult to conduct dialogue with the U.S. the next time it violates an agreement.

It is reassuring that the Obama Administration is not relaxing the reins of sanctions against North Korea, particularly given that the Clinton and Bush Administrations both made the North Korean nuclear problem worse by failing to maintain consistency in their policies.

If the Obama Administration is confident of maintaining that stance, it may not be necessary to shake off the hand the North is now extending.

(UNSC) Resolution 1874 is much stronger than (UNSC) Resolution 1718 that went into force after the North's first nuclear test in 2006. It is pushing the North into a corner. But bear in mind that North Korea is much more determined than the U.S. or other countries to persevere. It cannot be ruled out that it will put up with the sanctions indefinitely.

Mitchell Reiss, a former director of the Office of Policy Planning at the State Department, who was mentioned as a candidate for special envoy for North Korea, said, "Disliking North Korea is an attitude, not a policy." He called for perseverance. If the U.S. in the past negotiated from a position of trusting the North, perhaps now is the time to try and negotiate with suspicion but with a determination to persuade.

STEPHENS